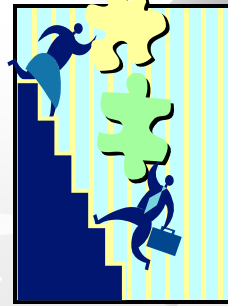


The matter of sidewalks and how to regulate their design has been a topic of discussion with the Mayor and Council for some time. The white paper prepared in conjunction with this discussion provides recommendations by the staff on how to proceed within the zoning ordinance revision process. We focused on commercial/mixed-use streets since we believe they are the most important in terms of pedestrian interactions with other pedestrians, the streets, and the storefronts.

Intent

- ☀ Provide new or updated standards for sidewalks
- ☀ Ensure that the standards can vary as needed
- ☀ Activate large areas with suitable amenities



The intent of the zoning ordinance revision is to provide new or updated standards for sidewalks; Ensure that the standards can vary as needed to accommodate unique situations; and be able to activate large sidewalk areas with suitable amenities to enliven and activate those areas so they don't appear uninviting.



Context

- ☀ **Different standards depending on need**
 - ✳ **Larger, unobstructed sidewalks for moving large crowds quickly – stadiums, tourist areas, “big-box” centers, etc.**
 - ✳ **Shopping and mixed-use areas should have designs that foster slower movements and more personal interaction**

In this context, we need to consider different standards depending on need. Where there is a need to move large numbers of people quickly, such as around stadiums, tourist areas, big-box shopping centers, and the like, there is a need for large, relatively unencumbered pedestrian areas; In more intimate shopping and mixed-use areas, like the Town Square, sidewalks should be designed to enhance the pedestrian experience by slowing things down, give the pedestrian time and opportunity to window-shop, consider an outdoor café menu, and just interact with other pedestrians. In these latter cases, the sidewalk widths want to be narrower to impart some friction during high traffic times.



30-foot wide sidewalk in San Jose, CA

**Wide sidewalks in low traffic areas
Can be barren & uninviting**

This picture is a sample of a case where the sidewalk is really too wide. The buildings don't appear to be primarily retail, and they may be on a secondary street. This sidewalk, at 30 feet wide does not reflect the context of the location. In addition, there is nothing here to attract or encourage people to stay. No trees, benches or other amenities.



Pedestrian-Only Street: Grafton Street, Dublin, Ireland

In some instances, such as a very popular tourist area, the pedestrian traffic is so high that they have closed off the public street. Experience in this country suggests that such street closings, except in very special circumstances, do not work well.



The “S.H.O.P.” Model

- ☀ **S**torefront Zone: Narrow area next to building used for bays, enhanced entries, seating, etc.
- ☀ **H**allway Zone: Public walking portion.
- ☀ **O**utside Zone: Area between walkway and street – used for tree plantings, outdoor seating, amenities.
- ☀ **P**arking/Pedestrian Zone: Safe area next to curb.

Staff recommends using the SHOP model as a basis for developing new standards. SHOP stands for Storefront Zone; Hallway Zone; Outside Zone; and Parking/Pedestrian zone. The model divides the sidewalk area into 4 distinct zones with four different sizes for each of the zones.



The storefront zone is a narrow area against the building that shopkeepers can utilize to expand out into the public zone. These extensions might be bay windows, enhanced entry treatments, outdoor seating, window shopping, sidewalk sales, and similar activities. The Hallway zone is the area of unobstructed pedestrian movement. It should be wide enough not to seriously restrict movement, but not so wide that there is no friction that helps moderate the pedestrian speed and enhance the feeling that this is a popular, “happening” place worthy of slowing down a bit to enjoy. In most instances, the Hallway zone should be about eight feet wide. The Outside zone accommodates larger outdoor seating areas, street tree planting zones, and other amenities. It can be treated like an outdoor room, where benches and other seating are provided, outdoor cafes can operate, or space for gathering spots. It actually acts makes the whole sidewalk like an outdoor room, framed on the sides and even overhead with the street tree canopy. The Outside zone should be on the order of six to eight feet wide. The Parking/pedestrian zone is a space next to the curb that allows for unobstructed entry and exit from vehicles parked along the curb, or is an area where pedestrians can go off the curb without walking directly into traffic. This space should be about 2 feet wide at a minimum. The west side of Newmarket Street in the Town Square has a flexible zone where cars may park, or the Outdoor zone can be expanded.



Recommendations

- ☀ **No current standards except in some neighborhood plans.**
- ☀ **Incorporate some sidewalk standards into the ordinance**
- ☀ **Develop standards based on street classifications**
- ☀ **Provide added regulations for outdoor café seating**
- ☀ **Provide standards/guidelines for underground utility location**

There are essentially no current sidewalk standards in the ordinance. Some of the neighborhood plans do have some design recommendations (Town Center; Rockville Pike). The staff requests that the Mayor and Council endorse the following recommendations as the direction to be taken in the zoning ordinance revision:

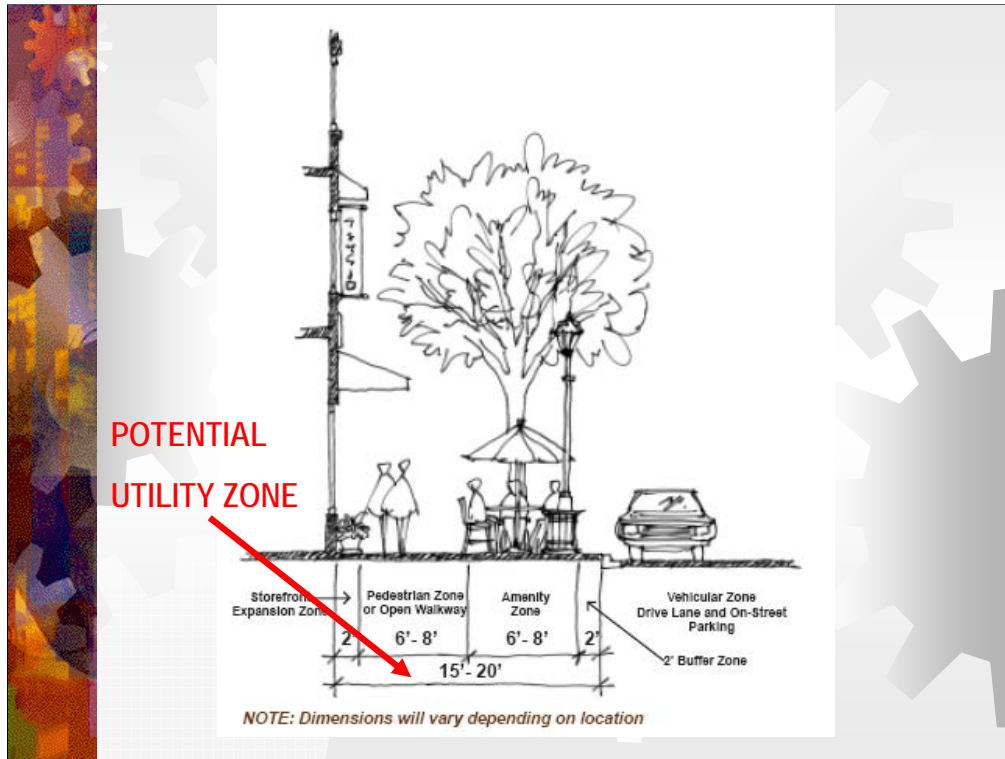
Incorporate some sidewalk standards into the zoning ordinance, to at least achieve some minimum requirements. This may also include added standards in Chapter 21.

Development sidewalk design standards based on the classification of the streets. The more important “main” streets will typically want more generous widths and amenities than the smaller, secondary streets with less pedestrian traffic.

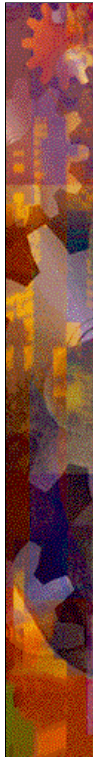
Provide added regulations for outdoor café seating to ensure that the use does not infringe on pedestrian movements.

[Click to next page diagram] Provide standards and/or guidelines for the location of underground utilities so that future servicing will minimize disruption at the surface.

Some of the necessary standards may be provided in the zoning ordinance itself. Others may be included in Chapter 21 of the Code, the “Streets and Public Improvements” chapter. Some regulations will depend in part on any design



Once the legislation is adopted by Mayor and Council, other boards must interpret the mixed use district requirements in compliance with the regulations that they are responsible for reviewing. A specific mixed-use zone might have a historic district overlay applied to it. The HDC then reviews the requirements of the historic district with the requirements of the mixed use district as applied to individual historic properties.



Condition/Zone	Storefront Expansion	Pedestrian	Tree/Amenity/ Outdoor Seating ²	Buffer ³	Total
Mixed Use Districts	2'-3' wide	8' – 12' wide	7' – 10' wide Landscaping Zone: 5'-7' wide	0'-2' wide ⁴	20' wide minimum 25' wide maximum
MD 355 Corridor	2'-3' wide	8' – 10' wide	7' – 10' wide Landscaping Zone: 5'-7' wide	0'	20' wide minimum 25' wide maximum
Other Non-Residential Streets (if needed)	2'-3' wide	8' – 12' wide	7' – 10' wide Landscaping Zone: 5'-7' wide	0'-2' wide	20' wide minimum 25' wide maximum
New Residential Streets	N/A	4' – 8' wide	4' – 7' wide	2' wide	10' wide minimum 17' wide maximum

Notes:

- 1 Minimum widths may be waived by the approving body for short portions of a sidewalk.
- 2 Trees are required but other elements may be optional depending on the location.
- 3 May be part of the Tree/Amenity/Outdoor Seating Element
- 4 2' required where there is on-street parking and/or metered parking

This table, reproduced on page 12 of the white paper, provides initial suggested sidewalk design standards based on the character of the adjoining streets. These dimensions are preliminary at this time, but reflect the general recommendations to date. Refinements will occur during the course of the review program. Suggested standards are shown on the table for residential streets for reference, but are not included in the body of this paper.

Any Questions?

